UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Distr.
LIMITED

E/ECA/PAMM/HRP/85/WP.2
June 1985

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

National Manpower and Employment
Planning Staff Development Workshop

Monrovia (Liberia), 12-30 August 1985

LC/NAIROBI.

THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR MANPOWER PLANNERS IN AFRICA

(For discussion)

THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR MANPOWER PLANNERS IN AFRICA

I. Introduction

1. This working document is intended to (a) provide a framework towards the understanding of the nature and scope of human resource management and (b) highlight the role of the Manpower Planner in the process of human resource management for development. The treatment of issues and concepts as contained in this document transcends the traditional piecemeal, singular and disintegrated approach which, unfortunately, have guided human resource planning, development and utilization programmes in Africa over the years.

2. Accordingly, the document illustrates, analytically, the dynamic inter-relationships between human resource planning, its development and utilization, and the planning for and delivery of adequate health services, nutrition, food, housing and environment conditions. Its objectives therefore are to:

(i) alert Manpower Planners of the magnitude and linkage relationship of their role in the overall process of sectoral planning for national development; and

(ii) stimulate discussions amongst sector planners, practitioners, policy makers and programme executors with a view to guide and/or re-enforce their respective actions.

3. The document is to also serve as a background document to a series of working documents prepared by the ECA on human resource management for use in national manpower and employment planning staff development workshops. Consequently, it highlights and defines some basic conceptual issues and elements related to human resource management and what is expected of the Manpower Planner in the process. This analysis is followed by a summary of issues and questions designed to stimulate discussions and, the sharing of ideas on the nature and scope of human resource management as they particularly relate to respective countries and Africa in general.

II. The Nature and Objective of Human Resource Management

(a) Human Resouce as a Sub-set of a Nation's Natural Resoruces:

4. All nations are endowed with a set of NATURAL resource bases comprising of water, land, mineral and animal. The animal resource base consists of a human resource base and other animal resource base. The management and interplay of each of the natural resource bases, with the human resource base as the initiator and conductor, do create what is usually called "CAPITAL STOCK" or "VALUE" resource or "DEVELOPMENT" resource which then can be used to enhance further growth and distribution of development benefits. Foremost among the created resources are the following:

Money or financial resources
- cash (notes and coins)
- reserves (cash and gold)
- bonds and security
- liquid assets other than bonds and security

Capital or infrastructural resources

- tools and implements
- machineries
- houses
- roads and transport
- communication net work

Energy resources

- electricity
- gas
- water power
- solar

Manpower or human resources

- skills
- knowledge
- attitudes
- fitness
- efficiency

5. The extent to which a nation is able to institute policies and measures that would adequately create the above listed resources would determine the development index of that nation. Consequently, the establishment and operation of an effective management system which integrates the planning, development and utilization of the endowed natural resources should constitute a priority pre-occupation of any government. This pre-occupation should be centred around applying sound management principles in optimizing total socio-economic development efforts and in harnessing present and future value resources for the efficient production, distribution and consumption of goods and services.

6. Two pre-conditions must however be met if the above pre-occupation is to take on a meaning. First, there must be a systematic control over the FLOW, TYPE and SIZE of a given resource. In other words, the growth or diminishing trends of the resource stock will have to be determined and managed systematically. So would be the types and sizes of present and future reserves. Secondly, there must be a system and institutional arrangements which would ensure that the given resource base is well DEVELOPED, highly DIVERSIFIED and efficiently UTILIZED. Failure on the part of any government to ensure these two pre-conditions would lead to the dychotomy of a "rich yet poor nation" which characterises nearly all African nations.

(b) Elements of human resource management and implications for the manpower planner

7. To provide the systematic control and institutional arrangements, an effective resource management system will have to be developed and operated. The required system should have capabilities to (i) plan and co-ordinate activities and programmes, (ii) explore, mobilize, exploit and develop the given resource, and (iii) utilize the resource for the advancement of peoples' living standards. Three inter-woven techniques are required for optimizing the effectiveness of these capabilities. These are administration, organization

and execution of a system in relation to national endowments and needs.

8. With regards human resource management, these techniques can be described respectively as follows:

(i) Administration: the existence and adherence to or enforcement of rules, policies, procedures, guidelines and schedules for monitoring human resource status, planning, mobilization, development, deployment and utilization.

(ii) Organization: the establishment and operation of institutions and systems for (a) managing and administering human resource planning, development and utilization programmes and (b) executing the planning, development and utilization functions.

(iii) Execution: the actual commitment of resources and efforts towards the implementation of programmes and plans for the planning, mobilization, development, allocation and utilization of the nation's human resource.

9. As implied earlier, the human resource base initiates the transformation process of the other natural resource bases. This implies that the objective of human resource management should be aimed at the efficient development and utilization of the other resource bases. Consequently, a nation's manpower flow, type and size need to be monitored and human skills and knowledge developed and diversified with a view to creating a set of adequate and diversified value resources.

10. The Manpower Planner has a significant role to play in assuring that the activities associated with the administration, organization and execution of programmes to bring about the above results, are co-ordinated. This role should be aimed at establishing the necessary equilibrium between policies and strategies for human resource development as well as for matching manpower supplies and demands in accordance with national objectives, goals and resources. To be effective in undertaking this role, the Manpower Planner needs to have a clear understanding of the nature, scope and issues involved in human resource management as a starting point. Secondly, the Manpower Planner needs to be skillful at work and in negotiations at national and sectoral levels. The former would require the formulation of operational definition for basic concepts and the identification of the types and levels of "human values" or "human capital" that are demanded by various users of labour. The later would require the institution of staff development programmes and the granting of appropriate authority and priority to manpower planning.

11. Efforts are made in the rest of this document to highlight the complexities of these concepts and issues associated with human resource management. This is intended to stimulate discussions and to better focus the Manpower Planner on the nature and scope of human resource management.

III. What are Some of the Basic Concepts and What do They Mean?

12. Over the years, several definitions of human resource have emerged taking on different connotations for different groups. A synthesis of these interpretations suggests that generally human resource is understood as a vital factor input to national economic and social development. On the basis of this general notion,

many concepts have been or are being developed within the human resource management process. As expected, each has varying application in different countries and each taking on different connotations for different interest groups.

13. During the last few years, the Human Resources Development Section of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) paid greater attention to defining some of the elements embodied in most of these concepts. This exercise has resulted in a thought process towards the development of operational definition for the widely used human resource management concepts. Included in these thoughts are the following:

14. Human Resource: Can be described aggregatively as a stock of a nation's human beings who can be drawn upon to bring about present and future production and distribution of goods and services. As such the human resource stock should be planned, developed and utilized on a systematic basis. There are three reasons for this.

15. Fist, human beings constitute a major national stock of potential resources with specific variables which occur naturally and crystalize into various types, forms and characters. The extent to which these variables, commonly referred to as human resources or manpower, can be effectively used in the production and distribution processes would determine the extent to which that nation's human stock can be called an effective human resource for national development. In other words as with the case of the variables of say the capital resources i.e.: houses, tools, roads, etc., the variables of the human resource could be developed or undeveloped, over-developed or under-developed, utilized or unutilized, over-utilized or under-utilized.

16. Secondly, at any given point in time, the composition of a nation's human stock is heterogeneous in nature. It is composed of male and female, young and old, abled and unabled men, women, boys and girls who are spread within various aged groups and dispersed over a geographic land space. The size of the stock within each of the above categories could be small or large depending on the trends of migration, fertility and mortality all of which are controlled by the human beings within the human resource stock. Additionally, and equally important, is that at any given point in time, the human stock is the prime benefactor of national production and distribution efforts of the human beings within the human resource stock. In short, though the human resource stock is the most difficult of all natural resources to develop and manage given its heterogeneousity, it could be said to be the most important natural resource or wealth of any nation particularly when it comes to activating the planning, development and utilization of the other natural resource bases.

17. Manpower or Human Resources: These are essential variables inherent within each unit of a nation's human resource stock. They are the resources available to each human being and can be traded between users and owners to improve their respective living conditions. These variables, whose combined effect would yield a high level of labour productivity if properly developed and utilized, are interchangeably referred to as "labour", "human capital", "human value", "manpower", "human power" and human resources. They can be described as follows:

Knowledge	- knowing about what is to be done
Skill	- knowing how to do that which is to be done
Attitude	- demonstrating a favourable inclination while doing that which is to be done
Kinet	- possessing the stamina or energy to put the knowledge, skill and attitude into practice to do what is to be done
Efficiency	- getting done what is to be done optimally with the least possible cost in terms of efforts, time and resources

18. What is unique about the above human resources when it comes to enhancing their contribution to national development, is that their development and deployment are not limited to external intervention of other human-power and nature as is with the case of variables inherent within each unit of the other natural resource stock. Their enhancement techniques also depend upon the abilities of owners of the resources to identify those resources as productive forces and to exploit efficiently the inward drive, initiative, goals, desires and curiosity which are invisible within every human being. In essence, each unit of the human stock has a major complementary role to play internally in the development and deployment of the inherent resources. Whenever this role is adequately played, the outcome is respectively called "self-development" and "commitment" either to one self or to an employer, both of which are essential for fostering aggregate growth and development.

19. Human Resource Planning: An analytic and systematic process which provides the basis for determining and monitoring measures and strategies that would manage (a) the in and out flow of men and women in the present and future work force (b) the distribution of the work force by sectors, region and industry, and (c) the number of human beings who can be drawn upon for production and distribution of goods and services for now and the future.

20. One could easily confuse the above definition with that for population planning. Though related, the two are indeed different in two respects. First, their relationship equations are different. The population planner is primarily concerned with the relationship between (a) a nation's total present and future human being and (b) that nation's ability to support the needs of the total number of people. The human resource planner on the other hand, is concerned with the relationship between (a) the number of human beings within a given human stock whose skills, knowledge, attitude and stamina can be used to provide present and future support not only for the nation's population but for population of other nations, and (b) measures by which the national economy mobilizes a group of people and provides for the effective development and utilization of their skills, knowledge, attitudes and stamina for production purposes.

21. Secondly, the population planner differs from the human resource planner in the treatment of their respective relationship equations. For instance, population planning concentrates primarily on one side of the equation while human resource planning deals with both sides of the equation. In other words, the population planner analysis are directed towards questions, issues and adjustments relating to the total number of people or population size in a given time and land space and how they are distributed leaving the national supportive capacity side of the equation to other sectoral planners. Whereas the human resource planner is concerned with the analysis of questions and issues that would lead to the formulation, monitoring and co-ordination of policies

and strategies not only for the mobilation and flow of an appreciable size of productive human resource stock, but also for the development and utilization of an occupationally diversified human stock at various levels.

22. Consequently, the process of human resource planning brings into equilibrium present and future labour market conditions through (a) the creation of operational linkages between the development of a nation's human resource and the deployment and utilization of that resource; and (b) the formulation of programmes, strategies and measures that would optimize labour productivity and minimize unemployment.

23. Manpower Development and Utilization Planning: As indicated earlier, manpower is a derived resource. It constitutes human skills, knowledge, attitudes, fitness and efficiency. These labour resources need to be carefully planned, developed and appropriately applied in relation to national needs and resources for a given population. This calls for an integrated approach involving all sectors of the economy with particular emphasis placed on health, nutrition, education, training, legislation, investment and labour allocation. The need for planning suggests that each sector develops capabilities to assess and determine policies and measures that would lead to the development of a sound human resource base. This is where manpower planning would make its major contribution.

24. What is this manpower planning which is often confused with human resource planning? It could be regarded as a systematic and analytic process which focuses on two areas of concern. One, the process assesses and determines quantitatively the nation's present and future stock of and need for skills, knowledge, attitude and fitness by types and levels and indicating gaps and imbalances in accordance with national needs. Additionally, the process of manpower planning assesses and determines the quantitative adequacy of health services, food content and intake and shcool enrolment and outputs.

25. The process is indeed vital to the development of a sound human resource base for national development. The point is that manpower planning provides basic statistics to aid various sector planners in the formulation of policies and measures that would enhance the contribution of their respective programmes which impact a nation's human resource ability to develop and use of relevant skills, knowledge, attitude and fitness. For example, it permits the education techniques and teaching effectiveness. Food and health planners need the statistics to guide and assess programmes which affect those physiological resources (i.e. brain, nerves, sensory receptors and muscles) that need to be developed so as to enhance the development of cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills of the human resource. As for the human resource planner, the information will be used to manipulate equilibrium conditions in the labour market within sector, region, industry and occupation.

26. One factor leading from the above, which has been recognized over the years, but to which very little attention is given within the process of national planning, is the dynamic inter-relation which exists between the planning for human resource development and utilization on the one hand, and the planning for health, food and environment services on the other. Contemporary thinking has it that "ingredients" such as good health, nutritious food and a conducive environment do contribute simultaneously during the development and utilization stages of manpower. On the development side, it is now acknowledged that much of the foundation for a sound and healthy mind and body are laid at the formative years of a person during which time, the consumption of nutritious food and

better health care play a dominant role. Equally recognized is that workers attitudes, initiatives, energy and efficiency are heavily influenced by the intake of nutritious food, better health care and a conducive working environment. Therefore, planning for the development and delivery of these ingredients ought to be regarded not as ends within themselves, but as a means for the optimum development and utilization of a nation's workforce.

27. In view of the above, manpower development could be considered as activities and programmes that would increase the value of adequate and appropriate human skills, knowledge, fitness, attitudes and efficiency required of a high-quality human resource input into all sectors of the economy. Achieving this entails the development and operation of administrative institutions and instructional infrastructure for education and training as well as for the execution of appropriate policies and programmes to ensure the development of health, nutrition and a conducive environment.

28. It should be noted that manpower development within this context takes place at three levels. First, there is the role of the "invisible hand" or nature which administers a natural "process of learning by living". Then there is the impact of "self-development" which could be consciously on unconsciously administered by the person possessing the inherent resources. Finally, there is the "visible hand" or formal institutions which, probably because of their visibility, dominates manpower development planning and programming. Consequently, the required institutions and infrastructure referred to above should be of such so as to allow for the optimized development processes at each of the three levels.

29. Similarly, manpower utilization calls for the undertaking of activities and programmes that would mobilize, distribute and facilitate the effective use of the created human capital to achieve national and personal objectives. This would entail the development and operation of administrative institutions that would actually (a) locate, test and place job seekers (b) liaise between employer and employee organizations and (c) execute employment, income and labour productivity programmes.

30. Utilization takes place in either one of two forms. Manpower can be used to produce goods and services at a renter wage in accordance with another person or institution's goals. Alternatively, human skills, knowledge, fitness, attitudes and efficiency can be used by persons possessing these attributes to produce goods and services for meeting his/her own needs and objectives. The former could be referred to as "external employment" and the latter as "internal" or "self-employment". Though a significant proportion of the African work-force could be considered self-employed, very little planning and development of institutions and programmes have taken place with regards the optimization of self-employment activities in Africa. Needless to say that this neglect has withheld a major contribution from African development. Hence, efforts should now be made in the enhancement of activities and programmes that will not only promote "external-employment" but will optimize "internal-employment" as well.

IV. Human Resource Management in Africa

31. So far, we have considered the general nature and scope of human resource management with a view to guide manpower and other sectoral planners in understanding their roles in the whole process of human resource development and utilization. Perhaps the extent to which African planners have understood this inter-related role as referred to so far is reflected in a number of issues that characterized the process of human resource management in Africa. Below is summary of these issues and some ideas for consideration in response to the issues as identified by the ECA. They are presented here with the aim to stimulating discussion and guiding future actions in the establishment, development and operation of institutions and programmes for the planning of human resource development and utilization in Africa.

(a) Summary of major issues on the status of human resource management in Africa

1. Lack of universally acknowledged, accepted and applied operational definition of human resource and manpower in respect of their scope and nature;
2. Human resource planning is undertaken in isolation of (i) overall socio-economic development planning, and (ii) the development, allocation and productive utilization; and hence lack of co-ordination in the planning, the development and the utilization aspects;
3. Piecemeal and singular approach in human resource planning, with more emphasis on the quantitative balancing of the supply and demand equation, and little on qualitative and mutually supportive aspects;
4. Tendency to regard education and training as the only quality enhancing factor in human resources development, leaving out the role of health, nutrition and food, habitat/environment, productive employment;
5. Tendency to overstress the formal wage employment sector with little or no regard to self-employment, self income generation activities, and
6. The paucity of data and institutional arrangements for the collection, processing and application of data for human resource management.

(b) Ideas for consideration in response to the above mentioned issues

1. Like with other natural stock of resources, human resource should command a similar care in its development and productive use;
2. Like other natural resources there are specific variables that are innate and naturally occur in humans. These variables need to be identified and developed. They include:
   (a) Physiological resources consisting of the brain, nerves, sensory receptors, muscles and the skeleton metabolic body systems;

(b) The urge or drive for basic needs satisfaction and the propensity to engage in exploratory, creative, inventive, innovative and thought processes of research and development activities for sustained income generation activities thereby fostering technological change and spurring growth;

(c) Organizational traits embracing the inclination for order and organization which will allow a person to establish and manage the planning, development and utilization of other non-human and human resource bases.

The extent to which each of these innate resources is developed will enhance the output levels of the following human value resources as identified earlier:

(a) Knowledge of the whats, when and hows of doing things or phenomena
(b) Skills relative to

(i) intellectual "covert" thought processes often referred to as cognitive skills;
(ii) emotive aspect of feelings, interests, attitudes, motivations, emotions and value processes that are often referred to as affective skills;
(iii) performance skills of manipulation of tools, equipment and instrument for accomplishing tasks in production, service rendering and income generation, often referred to as psychomotor skills;

(c) Kennet or energy to endure and work consistantly through a process over time;
(d) Attitude in terms of commitment and seeing one self as part of a productive process;
(e) Efficiency in doing the work incurring the least cost in terms of efforts, time and resource inputs.

3. A comprehensive human resources utilization programme would therefore call for the:

(i) Generation and distribution of employment and income generation opportunities within the entire economy;
(ii) Effective allocation and appropriate deployment and utilization of human resources in all sectors of the economy;
(iii) Utilization of incentive systems for enhancing productivity and for influencing income generating activity;
(iv) Effective identification, development and exploitation of each individual's known "resources" for enhancing his/her self reliance and contribution to the nation.

4. A comprehensive human resources development programme would therefore call for a series of coherent and mutual re-inforcing policy and institutional machinery components involving a number of ministries, notably those responsible for social services, health, education, agriculture, manpower and development planning.

5. Institutional implications for ensuring the integration of the above human resources development and utilization programmes would require that the following subsystems be developed and operated as one system of the human resource management process;

(i) The human resource planning sub-system responsible for (a) balancing the equations for labour demand and supply and (b) setting policy and operational guidelines for the development and utilization of a quality human resource base for national development,

(ii) The human resource development sub-system to be responsible for the production of sectoral targets, mobilization of resources and execution of activities in education, training, health, food and nutrition, habitat and environment, employment and income generation activity;

(iii) The human resource utilization sub-system to be responsible for the activities that would actually identify and place workers and monitor programmes and policies that would enhance workers incomes and productivity.